



IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME

PICTURES FROM THE SNHS COLLECTION HAVE INSPIRED US TO CELEBRATE SUMMERS OF SUFFOLK PAST.



CONAN BEACH

The name was coined by combining the names of Lake Cohoon and the Nansemond River. Located on Pitchkettle Road near the Lake Cohoon dam, the beach was operated in the 20's, 30's, and 40's by Ben Parker and his wife, Bauldie. This was near the site of the earliest Nansemond County Courthouse at Jarnegeans Bridge. Eventually other dams were built and this portion of the Nansemond River became part of Lake Meade. The geography has changed a little but members of the Parker family still live on the land that was part of Conan Beach.

Judy Wilson Brinkley and Jane Harris Gatling remember riding their bikes to Conan Beach when they couldn't get a ride. They wore their wool(!) bathing suits for the trip rather than changing in the bathhouse. Mrs. Gatling notes that Pitchkettle Road was unpaved so they would find a rut and ride in it. They might buy a cool drink to enjoy before putting on their rubber bathing caps and swimming to the float. Remember, young readers, this was pre-air conditioning and before television. An afternoon at Conan Beach was \$.25 well spent in hot weather.



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Suffolk Goobers circa late 1940's.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

Baseball has been a popular summertime activity for more than a century. Towns all over the South had their own baseball teams in the first half of the twentieth century, and Suffolk was no exception. The local semiprofessional team played at Peanut Park on Saturday and Sunday afternoons in the summer in the 30's, 40's and 50's to crowds of 300-400 people most days and, on special promotion days or when we played Franklin, our arch rival, there might be 1000 people in attendance.

Memories are a bit hazy about particulars. However, there is some thought that the local team was called the Suffolk Aces in the 30's and then the Suffolk Goobers when Leon Familant became the sponsor in the 1940's and 50's. A league (possibly called the Albemarle League) was formed that included Emporia, Hopewell, Lawrenceville, Franklin, and other towns in Virginia and Elizabeth City, Edenton, and others in North Carolina.

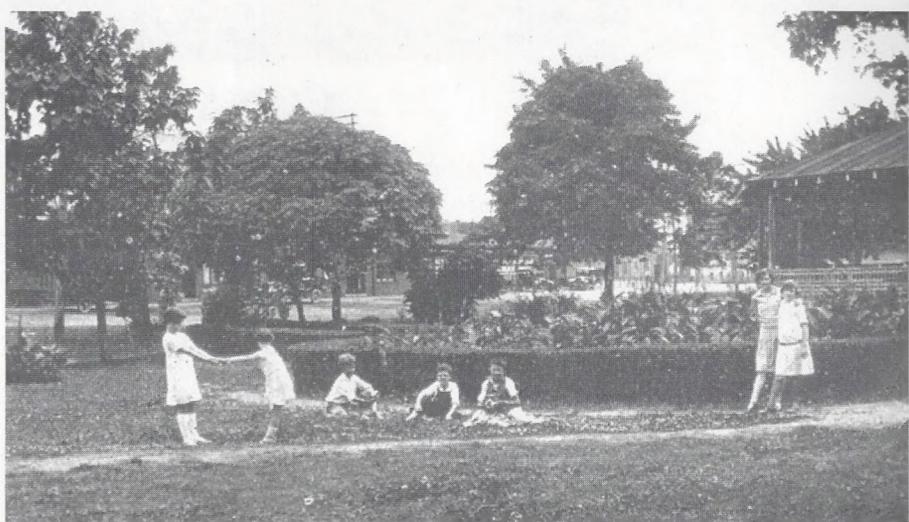
Many of the players were from surrounding counties but some locals played as well. Lawrence Oliver was first baseman, Norman Daughtry was pitcher, "Molly" Dougherty of Whaleyville pitched, and Joe Haslett was an umpire. Charlie Bradshaw of Suffolk left to play with the Cleveland Indians until he suffered an injury that ended his baseball career.

As we write this (7/28), the lead story of the Virginian Pilot sports page is about Edenton's baseball team. The article reports that in 1951 Edenton joined the Class D Virginia League that included the Suffolk Goobers. The Virginia League folded after the 1951 season. The Albermarle League was revived in 1954 and folded in 1959. Edenton is part of the Coastal Plain League today. Edenton and Petersburg have the only two communities owned teams in the League and The Edenton Steamers are believed to be the smallest community owned baseball franchise in the nation.

Thanks to Bobby Trump, Harold Barrett, and Dave Dougherty.

JOYNER PARK

We have written in a previous newsletter about Joyner Park at the end of Bank Street beside the Norfolk and Western depot. At the time of that writing, however, we had not found this picture. The bandstand shown (right) in this picture was the stage for Sunday afternoon band concerts in the 1920's and the park was the setting for ice cream "sociables" in the good old summertime.





The only people we can identify in this c. 1925 picture are the two at the table to the right. They are Judith Brewer(Godwin) and P. M. Burton.

THE PALM COURT

Al fresco dining is always a part of summer fun. It was particularly elegant at the Palm Court of the then new Elliot Hotel. French doors eventually enclosed the court. It is part of Suffolk Towers Apartments now, located on the corner of Main and Market Streets.

CULPEPPER'S POOL

Soon after Mr. & Mrs. I. P. Brinkley built their new home on the Norfolk Road (perhaps c. 1925), Mr. Brinkley built a swimming pool in the yard. He turned it over to his sons Burgess, Pretlow, and Ira to operate as a business. They charged \$0.05 admission. No doubt guests enjoyed this modern amenity but in a few years, the Brinkleys moved back in town.

We're not sure when Sheriff Frank Culpepper bought the home on old Norfolk Road (now East Washington Street) or when he opened the pool to the public. We do know it was open in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The bathhouses can be seen in the photo above and part of the concession stand is visible to the right. Not seen are the swings and other play equipment on the lawn nearby. One source remembers that the entry fee was \$ 0.25 per person and that water was from an artesian well. The same source remembers that Red Cross swimming lessons were taught here.

Amedeo Obici built a pool at Planter's Club probably in the 1940's. It was primarily for the use of his employees but Red Cross swimming lessons were taught here for a while as well. Eventually the Suffolk Swimming Pool opened in the 1950's and that was where the crowd could be found for several decades. The Suffolk pool, which was on Constance Road beside the Elks Club, closed in the 1990's.

Thanks to June Manlove Barrett, Bobby Trump, Judy Brinkley, and Georgia Saunders.



There were many more casual outdoor meals such as church picnics. The little girls pictured here were at an Oxford Methodist Church picnic at Burwell's Bay c.1925. They are (left to right) Ann Parker (White), Mildred Lancaster (Nugent), unknown and Jane Harris (Gatling). Thanks to Jane Gatling



This photo thanks to Georgia Culpepper Saunders.

NANSEMOND COUNTY WATERMELONS

The watermelon season signals hot work for some, and a cool, delicious treat for others. In the 1930's a total of 697 train carloads of watermelons were shipped from Suffolk - some from Nansemond County and some from surrounding areas. According to the October 1942 special edition of the Suffolk New Herald, W. S. Cross, and his brother H. L. Cross were pioneer watermelon buyers here. From around 1910-1912 the melons from this area were loaded into boats at Smithfield and shipped Norfolk. The Crosses would go to Norfolk, buy melons, and send them (by boat, of course) back to the wharf in Suffolk. (See our new Suffolk in Vintage Postcards for a picture of watermelons being shipped from Everett's).

In 1912, the Crosses received the first railway shipment of melons. They came from Ryland, North Carolina, in Chowan County, on the old Norfolk and Southern (first constructed through Nansemond County as the Suffolk and Carolina). The 1942 newspaper reports "the leading buyers here this year were Cross and Gayle, Wooster and Williams, and the P and L. Packing Company. In former years, Pruden, Williams, and H. M. Pinner and W. S. Cross have been heavy buyers".

Things change. The local Farm Service Agency reports that only 29 acres were used for watermelon growing in Suffolk last year. Trucks move melons now, of course.

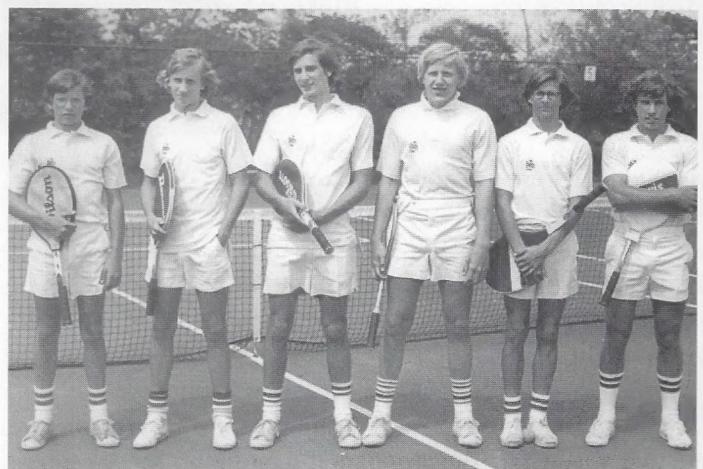
TENNIS

Tennis became popular in old Suffolk in the 1950's and 1960's. This popularity was probably thanks in large part to Coach Howard Mast who came to Suffolk in 1949 and is still coaching today. The public courts behind Farm Fresh on the old city farm are named for him.

Tommy Morgan (SHS '63) is tennis pro in Salem (formerly at the Homestead). He started the game with Mr. Mast. He said tennis was considered a girl's game at first but the boys followed. When Tommy first started playing around the age of eleven, he was embarrassed to walk from his home on Cedar Street to the tennis courts behind the high school carrying a tennis racket - too girly. He hid it in a paper bag to walk through downtown.

Each year at its annual banquet of the Suffolk Tennis Association presents the Tommy Morgan Boys Champion Trophy and the Barbara Brantley Trophy (for girls). The trophies are named for two of Mr. Mast's former students. They both won state championships as young players and Tommy Morgan was second in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

In 1957, Mr. Mast initiated the Suffolk Junior Invitational, which for many years involved players from all over the state and the region. They came to Suffolk to play and stayed in the homes of the local players. That tournament continues today but on a smaller scale.



The Suffolk High School Tennis team c. 1974. R. to L. Tommy Barrett, Trip Hobbs, Marc Hines, John Leonard Davis, Hank Simpson, and Joey Pierce.



The watermelon season signals hard, hot work for some and a cool, delicious treat for others.

NOTES FROM THE TRAIN STATION

The Seaboard Station Railroad Museum has experienced a growing number of guests during the summer months. During the month of June, the attendance was 740 and during July, the attendance was 506. The increase in visitors is due in part by the *Summer Storytime Series* featuring a delightful toy mouse named "Whiskers" created by our volunteer, Karen Grogan. The children and their caregivers have been thoroughly entertained by Karen's historic presentations. She has devoted many hours to prepare for the children. A few other changes that have occurred in the museum are the addition of our Children's Brochure. Another talented volunteer, Cindy Manno, wrote the brochure. It contains activities for the children and a short history of the station. The Train Station Committee would like to express gratitude to Karen and Cindy for their exceptional efforts. In addition, the committee also appreciates the participation of all of our volunteers; we could not be open to the public without all of you. *Lynn Bennett Ward*

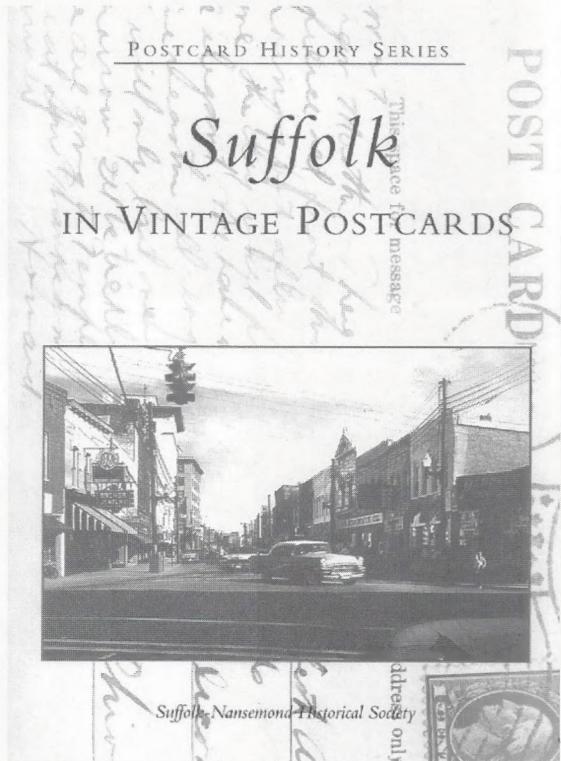
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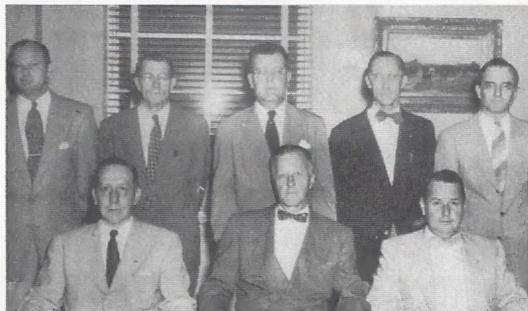
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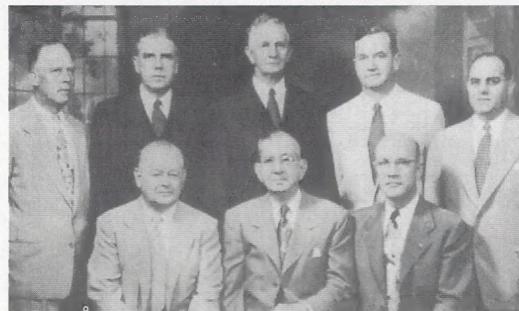
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WE DEEPLY REGRET ERRORS IN PICTURE CAPTIONS IN OUR LAST ISSUE.



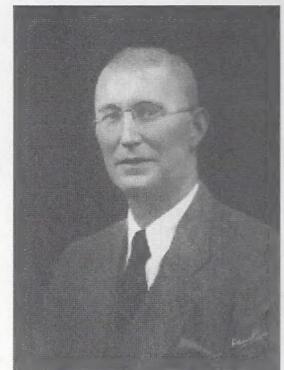
Obici Hospital Officers of the Staff, 1952

Standing: Dr. John Norfleet, Dr. W. T. Gay, Dr. Ivan Steele, Dr. Edward Joyner, Dr. W. Holmes Chapman. Seated: Dr. Beverly Holladay, Dr. J. Richardson Joyner, Dr. James Habel.

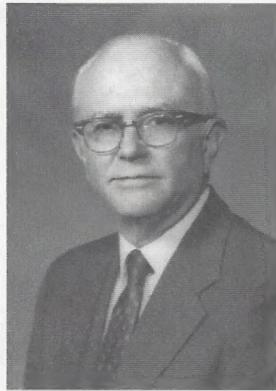


Obici Hospital Board of Directors, 1952

Standing left to right: Mr. Wm. Birdsong, Mr. James C. Causey, Mr. Whitney Godwin, Mr. Vernon Eberwine, Mr. Michael English. Seated: Mr. Lewis H. Cathey, Mr. Marion A. Cross, Mr. Harry J. Pettit.



*Dr. J. Lewis Rawls
Thanks to Rebecca
Rawls Habel, Dr.
Rawls' granddaughter
who married Dr.
Habel's son.*



*Dr. W. Holmes Chapman, 1911-1999,
was the first internist in Suffolk. The
Department of Internal Medicine at
Lakeview Clinic has been named for
Dr. W. Holmes Chapman.*



*Dr. J. E. Rawls Thanks
to his granddaughter Sue
Parker Burton*

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*The Suffolk Athletic Nine, shown here, was organized
in 1895.*